

Message Text

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ORIGIN PRS-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 PA-02 INR-07 USIE-00 IO-10 NSC-05

CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /036 R

DRAFTED BY S/PRS:RLFUNSETH:AVW

APPROVED BY S/PRS:RLFUNSETH

S/S-O: ASHANKLE

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O 172108Z FEB 75 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 035893

TOSEC 420

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HA.)

SUBJECT: STAR-NEWS HEADLINES: "SURPRISE U.S. SHIFT IN

-- CUBA TRAVEL BAN."

FOR AMBASSADOR ANDERSON FROM FUNSETH, S/PRS

NO. 30

1. WASH STAR-NEWS IN ITS LEAD PAGE ONE STORY, FEB 17, BY JEREMIAH O'LEARY, STATED THAT "THE UNITED STATES, IN A MAJOR GESTURE TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA, NOTIFIED THE CUBAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS OVER THE WEEKEND THAT ITS MEMBERS WILL NO LONGER BE RESTRICTED FROM TRAVELING MORE THAN 25 MILES FROM NEW YORK. "CUBAN AMB RICARDO ALARCON WAS NOTIFIED BY THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UN THAT WASHINGTON WILL NOW PERMIT CUBAN DIPLOMATS IN N.Y. TO TRAVEL 250 MILES WITHOUT HINDRANCE. AMB. W. TAPLEY BENNETT, ASSIGNED TO THE UN UNDER AMB. JOHN SCALI, CONFIRMED THAT THE ORDER WAS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT LATE FRIDAY AND WAS RELAYED TO THE CUBAN MISSION AT ONCE.

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THE DECISION TO EASE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS ON THE CUBAN

DIPLOMATS WAS ALSO CONFIRMED HERE AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE GOVERNMENT BUT THERE WAS NO IMMEDIATE OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF THE GESTURE. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON, HOWEVER, POINTED OUT THAT THE NEW 250-MILE LIMIT ON TRAVEL WILL

PERMIT CUBAN DIPLOMATS AT THE UN TO JORNEY FREELY TO WASHINGTON WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DO FOR 14 YEARS SINCE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE BROKEN BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND HAVANA.

"ASKED TO EXPLAIN WHY THE STATE DEPARTMENT DECIDED TO LIFT THE TRAVEL BARRIERS AGAINST THE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES OF PM FIDEL CASTRO, BENNETT SAID, 'I DON'T KNOW. THE MESSAGE CAME IN AT THE END OF THE DAY FRIDAY. I INTEND TO TRY TO FIND OUT MONDAY MORNING.'

"BUT OTHER AMERICAN OFFICIALS INDICATED THE RELAXATION OF THE TRAVEL BAN ON CUBAN DIPLOMATS IS ONLY THE FIRST OF WHAT MAY BE A SERIES OF ACTIONS THAT CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS THE REFLECTION OF A POLICY DECISION BY PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY OF STATE HAK TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE CASTRO REGIME.

"IT IS NOW LIKELY, THESE OFFICIALS SAID, THAT AMERICAN OWNED AUTOMOBILE FACTORES IN CANADA WILL SOON BE GIVEN OFFICIAL U.S. PERMISSION TO SELL VEHICLES AND PARTS IN THE INCREASINGLY LUCRATIVE CUBAN MARKET. SUCH SALES HAVE GENERALLY BEEN FORBIDDEN UNDER THE TRADING WITH THE ENEMY ACT, WITH SOME EXCEPTIONS, AS PART OF THE LONG-STANDING U.S. POLICY OF TRYING TO ISOLATE CUBA POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY FROM THE REST OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE." INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE035893
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RLFUNSETH:AVW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750057-0165
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750237/aaaabhcl.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PRS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 SEP 2003 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <31 DEC 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STAR-NEWS HEADLINES: "SURPRISE U.S. SHIFT IN -- CUBA TRAVEL BAN."
TAGS: OVIP, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: LONDON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006